

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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INR-07 NSAE-00 /044 W

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R 100738Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6034

INFO AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

CINCPAC HONOLULU

COMUSMACTHAI BANGKOK

DIA WASHDC

AMCONSULATE SONGKHLA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 13192

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PGOV PINT PEXT TH MY

SUBJECT: THAI-MALAYSIAN BORDER PROBLEMS AND VISIT OF MALAYSIAN
FOREIGN MINISTER TO BANGKOK

REF: BANGKOK 12919

SUMMARY: MALAYSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER RITHAUDEEN VISITS BANGKOK
MAY 9 FOR TALKS ON THAI-MALAYSIAN BORDER PROBLEM. EMBASSY
BELIEVES RELATIONS BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES ARE NOT RPT NOT
LIKELY TO BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY RECENT MALAYSIAN OPERATION,
THOUGH REVISION OF BORDER AGREEMENT IS ALREADY BEING NEGOTIATED.
HOWEVER, PERIODIC FLAREUPS OF THE KIND THAT TOOK PLACE LAST
WEEK APPEAR ALMOST INEVITABLE. END SUMMARY.

1. MALAYSIAN FOREIGN MINISTER, TENGKU AHMAD RITHAUDEEN,
PAID SHORT VISIT TO BANGKOK MAY 9, RETURNING TO KUALA LUMPUR
SAME EVENING AFTER MEETING WITH THAI FOREIGN MINISTER PHICHA
RATTAKUN. MALAYSIAN EMBASSY TELLS US THAT DISCUSSIONS
CENTERED ON NEGOTIATIONS TO REPLACE BORDER AGREEMENT OF
1965 AND TO CLARIFY UNDERSTANDINGS AND PRACTICES WHICH HAVE
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GROWN UP OVER THE YEARS. NEGOTIATIONS TO REPLACE BORDER

AGREEMENT ACTUALLY BEGAN WITH VISIT TO BANGKOK BY MALAYSIAN PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN IN FEBRUARY BUT HAVE BEEN GIVEN SPECIAL URGENCY BY RECENT MALAYSIAN OPERATION ON BORDER.

2. MALAYSIAN SIDE HAS BEEN AT PAINS TO EMPHASIZE THAT CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS WERE NOT RPT NOT PROMPTED BY RECENT OPERATION, AND MALAYSIAN EMBASSY TELLS US THAT IT HAS URGED RTG TO MAKE THIS POINT CLEAR IN PUBLIC STATEMENT. OTHERWISE, IF IT APPEARS THAT NEGOTIATIONS FOLLOW EXERCISE OF PRESSURE BY COMMUNIST PARTY OF MALAYSIA THROUGH DEMONSTRATIONS IN BETONG LAST WEEK, RESULT WILL PLAY INTO HANDS OF COMMUNISTS, TO DISADVANTAGE OF BOTH MALAYSIA AND THAILAND.

3. MALAYSIAN EMBASSY TELLS US THAT FOREIGN MINISTER RITHAUDEEN HAS ASSURED RTG THAT GOM ITSELF PROVIDES NO RPT NO ASSISTANCE OF ANY KIND TO MALAY SEPARATISTS IN BORDER AREA. IT IS TRUE THAT SOME ELEMENTS OF FORMER RULING FAMILIES OF SOUTHERN THAI PROVINCES LIVE IN MALAYSIA (E.G., TENGKU YALA, FORMER RULER OF YALA PROVINCE, LIVES IN KELANTAN. HOWEVER, HE IS VERY OLD AND RELATIVELY INACTIVE). MALAYSIANS HAVE MADE POINT TO THAI THAT IF MALAYS RESIDENT IN SOUTHERN THAILAND ARE PROVIDED WITH EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES, ESPECIALLY IN FIELD OF EDUCATION, THERE WILL BE LESS RECEPTIVITY TO MALAY SEPARATIST AGITATION IN MALAY COMMUNITY. MALAYSIAN EMBASSY HAS NOTED WITH SOME ENCOURAGEMENT FACT THAT NEW THAI DEPUTY MINISTER OF EDUCATION, SIDDIK SARIFF, IS A MALAY AND MAY BE COUNTED ON TO PRESS IMPROVEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES IN SOUTHERN THAILAND.

4. RE DAMAGE ALLEGEDLY DONE TO THAI RUBBER PLANTATIONS BY RECENT OPERATION BY MALAYSIAN SECURITY FORCES, WE UNDERSTAND THAT MALAYSIANS HAVE TOLD THAI THEY WILL PAY COMPENSATION FOR DESTRUCTION OF TREES, ETC., BUT GOM IS UNWILLING TO MAKE PUBLIC STATEMENT TO THIS EFFECT.

5. COMMENT: OUR IMPRESSION IS THAT MALAYSIAN-THAI RELATIONS ARE NOT RPT NOT LIKELY TO BE ADVERSELY AFFECTED BY RECENT MALAYSIAN OPERATION AND THAT CURRENT FUSS WILL
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BLOW OVER QUICKLY, ESPECIALLY WHEN NEGOTIATION OF NEW BORDER AGREEMENT COMPLETED. THERE ARE RESIDUES OF DIFFERENCES, HOWEVER, ON BOTH SIDES, AND PERIODIC FLAREUPS OF THE KIND THAT TOOK PLACE LAST WEEK APPEAR ALMOST INEVITABLE.
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